

Friends of the Library Organizations

Mr. Allen, librarian of Rhode Island State College, has sought through an enquiry to throw light on the experience of college and university libraries with groups of Friends.

THIS STUDY of Friends of the Library organizations is in no respect exhaustive. Visits were made to ten institutions.¹ Through correspondence information was obtained from five² more institutions which had Friends groups and from three which did not.³ The publications of the Friends of the Library organizations in twenty-one institutions⁴ have been covered, as well as all articles on the subject listed in *Current Library Literature*, 1921-42.

The American Library Association has summed up several of the more patent purposes of the Friends in a mimeographed publication.⁵ It says, in part, "The purpose of the college groups, although variously stated, is practically the same: to constitute a body of sleuths to discover idle books in private libraries, duplicate books, special collections. . . ." Other

equally important objectives of Friends organizations are:

(1) To supplement the library budget by cash contributions. The librarian at Colby specifically mentions this as an objective, and all of the twenty-four institutions in this study anticipate cash contributions as dues or gifts or both.

(2) To make the library more useful to students and faculty. Brown and New York University place emphasis on this point.

(3) To provide an understanding of the work of the library. Wellesley, New York University, and Brown feel this is important.

(4) To build up a greater realization of the importance of the library to the future development of the university. New York University mentions this.

(5) To stimulate the cultivation of an educated interest in their alma mater by the alumni. Brown hopes to achieve this.

The literature of Friends groups is full of interesting accounts of how various groups were founded, describing the initial dinners, the first drives for members, and the first numbers of the bulletins. The idea originated in Europe. Franklyn E. Parker, Jr., and Archibald Coolidge, then director of the Harvard Library, spent considerable time in Europe immediately after World War I collecting material for the Harvard library. They were impressed with the Friends of the Library group at the Paris Bibliothèque Nationale, which was started in 1913, and succeeded in launching a group at their alma mater in 1925. The idea spread almost at once to

¹ Brown, Columbia, Harvard, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, New York University, Knox (New York office), Princeton, Rutgers, Wellesley, Yale.

² Bucknell, Haverford, Michigan State, Washington State, Wesleyan.

³ Amherst, Pennsylvania State College, University of Rochester.

⁴ Brown, Buffalo, Bucknell, Chicago, Colby, Dartmouth, Haverford, Harvard, Knox, Princeton, Rutgers, Michigan State, New York University, Duke, Washington State, Wellesley, Wesleyan, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Yale, Columbia, Johns Hopkins.

⁵ American Library Association. *Friends of the Library Groups*. Chicago, A.L.A., 1938. 47p. Mimeographed.

Yale and Columbia and since to all sections of the United States and to all types of institutions.

The most general type of Friends organization has no permanent secretary and no constitution. It has compulsory annual dues and a publication issued at irregular intervals. Yale, Princeton, Wesleyan, Michigan State, and Brown have a council which acts in an advisory capacity. To hold an annual meeting at which officers are elected is common practice. The librarian acts as secretary of the Friends at Princeton, Duke, Haverford, Washington State, Michigan State, Johns Hopkins, and Chicago. His office, or that of the assistant librarian, serves as headquarters for the organization at Wellesley, Princeton, Brown, Duke, Haverford, Rutgers, Yale, Washington State, and Wesleyan. The Friends of the Knox College Library operate from the New York office of an alumnus, Edward Caldwell, and keep going through alumni support. At New York University, Dartmouth, Rutgers, and Harvard one or more members of the faculty are responsible for the initial activity of the group and aid the librarian in keeping it alive.

Activities

Friends organizations are engaged in a multitude of activities. At Johns Hopkins, Knox, New York University, Brown, and Wellesley they study desiderata lists and read reports upon the progress of the library. John Carter Brown Friends make visits to the library, thereby informing themselves of its activities. They attend lectures and exhibitions in the library at Johns Hopkins, Chicago, Harvard, Wellesley, Brown, Yale, and New York University. Friends quite generally give books and money for books

for the reference collection, and at Knox they make contributions toward additional copies for collateral reading and for current periodical subscriptions. At Wellesley, New York University, Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and Brown they donate specific items lacking in special collections. At Yale they have specialized in contributions to the rare book room. The Friends at New York University furnished a film-reading machine.

Sometimes special projects are promoted by Friends groups. At Princeton Friends have aided in raising funds for a new library building and have supported a graphic arts program. At the University of Toledo they have sponsored an endowment fund of one million dollars for the library. At Haverford they have voluntarily served to keep the treasure room open and to receive guests on Sunday afternoons. The University of Buffalo Friends use some of their funds for a lending library of new fiction and nonfiction and include a home delivery service. Finally, one of the major activities of most groups is the publication of bulletins.

Finances

The chief regular income of the Friends is from annual dues. Compulsory dues are most common, but Brown has voluntary dues. Harvard encloses a subscription or donation card with its news bulletin. Dartmouth, M.I.T., Wesleyan, and Knox ask for no regular annual contribution. All groups welcome contributions of money for general expenses, for their publications, and for book purchases, either general or specific. Many groups suggest that members leave money to the Friends as bequests. Dues at Rutgers go chiefly for the publication of the *Journal* of the Rutgers University Library. At

Princeton they are devoted to two purposes, the graphic arts project and the *Library Chronicle*. At Colby all money collected in dues goes for book purchases, and at New York University the same is true after running expenses and costs of the bulletin have been met. The New York University procedure is believed to prevail commonly elsewhere.

The accompanying chart presents a variety of information about Friends organizations.

FRIENDS ORGANIZATIONS

Name of Institution	Year of Founding	Possession of Constitution	Character of Dues ^a	Periodicity of Bulletin ^b
Brown	1938	Yes	Vol.	Q
Bucknell	1936	No	None	3 a year
Buffalo	1936	No	Comp.	Irreg.
Chicago	1934	Yes	Comp.	3 a year
Colby	1935	No	Comp.	Q
Columbia	1928	Yes	Comp.	Irreg.
Dartmouth	1938	No	None	Irreg.
Duke	1935	No	Comp.	Irreg.
Harvard	1925	No	None	Irreg.
Haverford	1943	No	Comp.	Irreg.
Johns Hopkins	1930	No	Comp.	Q
Knox	1931	No	None	Irreg.
M.I.T.	1937	No	None	Irreg.
Michigan State	1943	Yes	Comp.	Irreg.
N.Y.U.	1933	Yes	Comp.	Q
Princeton	1930	No	Comp.	Q
Rutgers	1937	Yes	Comp.	Semiann.
Washington State	1938	Yes	Comp.	Irreg.
Wellesley	1933	No	Comp.	Irreg.
Wesleyan	1931	No	None	Q
Yale	1928	Yes	Comp.	Q

^aVol.—voluntary
Comp.—compulsory

^bQ—Quarterly
Irreg.—Irregularly
Semiann.—Semiannually

The annual dinner has been discontinued for the duration at Princeton, Duke, and Washington State. The publications of the Friends organization have been continued at most institutions, but have been suspended at Knox, Columbia, Harvard, Dartmouth, and Duke. A drive for increased membership has been postponed until after the war at Princeton. The Knox organization has been inactive due to war activities on the Knox campus. Preoccupation of alumni and

faculty with the war has centered activities of Friends groups to an enlarged extent in the office of the librarian.

1. Friends groups occur in land-grant colleges and universities, small liberal arts colleges, and large privately endowed universities. Financially speaking, the results naturally have been greatest in the institutions with a large group of wealthy alumni, many of whom are interested in books and book collecting.

2. Groups conducted chiefly by alumni tend to fluctuate greatly in their effectiveness over a long period of time. Interest wanes and the group becomes inactive. Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Columbia, and Knox have experienced this.

3. Faculty management has brought about the same results as that of alumni.

4. A continuity of interest is best maintained when the group is directed from the library, although this requires a great amount of time and effort on the part of the librarian or some member of his staff.

5. Friends of the Library publications are uniformly valuable in promoting the interests of the library. An elaborate, expensive publication, although desirable, is not indispensable. A two- or four-page news sheet, preferably printed but even mimeographed, serves to call attention to important needs and activities of the library.

6. Friends groups have spread to the extent where they may compete with each other in urban centers. Frequently this competition works to the advantage of each unit concerned, by stimulating greater activity and achievement.

7. Friends groups are effective in spreading goodwill for the library and in giving recognition to the important role played by the library in the realm of higher education.

Some Periodical Publications by and Relating to Library Friends Included in This Study

Brown University. *Books at Brown*. Issued quarterly. 4-6p. V. I, no. 1, June 1938.
A news bulletin with desiderata lists. Attractively printed.

Bucknell University. *Bibliotheca Bucknellensis*. Irregular. 4-6p. V. I, no. 1, November 1936.
A news sheet.

Chicago University. *Courier*. Issued three times a year. V. I, no. 1, December 1934.
News items and articles dealing with collections.

Duke University. *Library Notes*. Issued irregularly. 4-6p. V. I, no. 1, March 1936.
A news bulletin.

Colby College. *Colby Library Quarterly*. Issued January, March, June, October. 16-20p. Ser. I, no. 1, January 1935.

Articles are literary, dealing chiefly with Colby library exhibitions and collections.

Columbia University. *Bibliotheca Columbiana*. Issued irregularly. Only four issued: April 1933, 12p.; December 1934, 20p.; June 1936, 16p.; August 1937, 9p.

Articles are news items dealing chiefly with Columbia library exhibitions and collections.

Dartmouth College. *Library Bulletin*. Issued irregularly. 16p. V. I, no. 1, April 1931; v. IV, no. 2, April 1943. Suspended for the duration.

Beginning with v. II, no. 10, March 1938, issues of the *Library Bulletin* of the Baker Library contain news items, lists of donors, information about the Friends of the Dartmouth library. This literary publication is otherwise strictly a publication of the library and not of the Friends.

Harvard University. *Library Notes*. Issued quarterly. 50p. V. I, no. 1, June 1920.

A publication of the Harvard library of high literary quality. It occasionally contains brief references to the Friends of the Harvard library.

—*News of the Harvard Library*. Issued for the Library Friends at intervals from Cambridge. Irregular. 2p. V. I, no. 1, November 1941. 2p. V. I, no. 2, February 1942. 2p. No more issued.

A news sheet giving brief reports on collections, gifts, etc.

Haverford College. *Library Associates' Bulletin*. Irregular. 4p. No. 1, Nov. 20, 1943. Mimeographed.

A news sheet.

Johns Hopkins University. *Ex Libris*. Issued quarterly. 4-8p. V. I, no. 1, May 1931.

A news sheet.

Knox College. *Books for the Knox College Library*. Irregular. 4-16p. No. 1, April 1932. Suspended for the duration.

A news bulletin and desiderata list.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology. *Footnotes*. Issued irregularly. 4-6p. Spring, 1938, D. B. Updike, Merrymount Press; spring, 1939, W. A. Diggins; summer, 1941, Douglas McMurtrie; summer, 1942, Berkeley Press; summer, 1943, Southworth-Anthoensen Press.

Each one is an outstanding piece of typographic design. A news bulletin. Each issue contains articles on the Friends of the M.I.T. Library.

New York University. Society for the Libraries. *Bulletin*. Issued quarterly. 8p. V. I, no. 1, January 1934.

A news bulletin with lists of desiderata. Handsomely printed.

Princeton University. *Biblia*. Issued irregularly. 40p. V. I-X, June 1930-December 1938.

A publication of the Princeton library and very good in literary quality.

—*Library Chronicle*. Issued quarterly. 40p. V. I, 1939. Continues *Biblia*.

Contains descriptive articles based on collections in Princeton University Library. Many issues contain a section called "Biblia," which carries news notes on Friends of the Princeton Library.

Rutgers University. *The Journal*. Issued semi-annually, December and June. 40p. V. I, no. 1, December 1937.

Articles are literary, dealing with material in Rutgers library. Excellent.

Washington State College. *Record*. Issued irregularly. 8-12p. V. I, no. 1, February 1939.

A news bulletin, listing donors, members, gifts.

Wellesley College. *Bulletin*. Issued irregularly. 4-16p. No. 1, 1937.

Outstanding from literary standpoint. Numbers 4 and 5 are especially impressive, based on material in Wellesley College Library and including desiderata lists and mention of notable acquisitions.

Wesleyan University. *About Books*. Issued quarterly. 12-16p. V. I, no. 1, October 1930.

Deals largely with collections in Wesleyan. A library publication with very infrequent reference to Friends' organization. Lists new books.

Yale University. *Library Gazette*. Issued quarterly. 24-48p. V. I, no. 1, June 1926.

Chiefly a publication of the library, with occasional reference to Friends of the Library.